



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305

April 24, 1975

STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Department of Genetics
(415) 497-5052

Dr. J.W. Hopkins
Chairman
Department of Biology
Washington University
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Dr. Hopkins,

Thank you for your letter of March 5th concerning the evaluation of Dr. Richard Young as Professor of Biology (Space Sciences).

I have known Dr. Young for at least 15 years. During that time he has occupied a variety of roles: as an experimental biologist and then later with more and more administrative responsibility for biological work in NASA. His work has brought him into daily contact with a wide variety of professionals in the engineering and physical as well as biological sciences, with administrators and budget makers, and with a wide range of scientific and technical information. He is a competent investigator and he excels as a coordinator of the efforts of other people. He would then be best suited in a combined research and administrative capacity. These qualities are widely recognized and appreciated by his colleagues occupying different niches in the ecological-administrative system. This would not be possible if he did not have an unusual sensitivity and respect for the needs of others and deeply engrained standards of integrity and fairness in his interpersonal relationships and commitments to the values of scholarly and scientific pursuits. His motivations for social utility and for educational efficacy are of the highest standard. There are many other positive traits that I might believe ought to be taken for granted as corollaries of what I have said; if I have left out anything that I believe would be relevant to this position, it is purely by inadvertence. He would bring a high degree of energy, devotion, imagination and judgment and I hope you have been able to configure the task to be able to attract him.

In fact I may have overstressed his administrative role since that is how I best know him. This may not give enough credit to his scientific judgment which I have always found to be sober and insightful in the most complex circumstances. He would plainly be most uniquely effective in a context of interdisciplinary cooperation (which Space Science must be). I know that his primary scientific interests are in the effects of gravitational fields on embryogenesis. It is an area that has spouted much nonsense, but not from Dick. While he is trained primarily as an embryologist, he has also done creditable work in environmental microbiology that has been important in the design of the Viking mission.

over

LT. J. P. KENNEDY, JR. LABORATORIES FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE, DEDICATED TO RESEARCH IN MENTAL RETARDATION

MOLECULAR BIOLOGY

HEREDITY

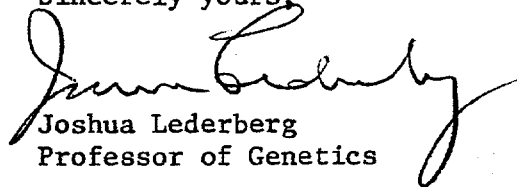
NEUROBIOLOGY

DEVELOPMENTAL MEDICINE

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His leaving NASA would be in fact some personal loss to me since I have enjoyed working with him in that context and do not readily foresee a comparable opportunity in his new role. However, no one can escape the prognostications about the long-range future of NASA funding of scientifically (as opposed to purely technically) oriented lines of work, and his position at NASA surely must become daily more frustrating for reasons beyond his control. But through many gloomy occasions I have never seen him lose his good cheer and his determination to make the best of the most difficult situations, usually with unexpected success.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Joshua Lederberg', written in a cursive style.

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr